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REASONS

Humbly OFFER'D against the Intended ~~1029. a~~
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DUTY

To be LAID on

PLATE, *and the* ALTERATION

OF THE

STANDARD.

IN A

LETTER to a MEMBER of
PARLIAMENT.

By a Working SILVER-SMITH.

LONDON: Printed in the Year
MDCCXX. 2

REASON

THE

STANDARD

OF THE

PARLIAMENT

the 1st of January

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REASONS

Humbly Offer'd againſt the Intended

DUTY

TO BE

Laid on PLATE, &c.

SIR,



THE General Concern you have upon all Occasions shown for your Country, and the particular and exact Judgment I have often my self observ'd you to have in the several Beauties, and Perfection of our ART; naturally lead me at this Time humbly to implore your kind Interposition for the Rescue of the Whole thereof from immediate Ruin, and Destruction, by the intended *Tax* and *Alteration* of the Standard.

I SHOULD shew little regard to the Valuableness of your Time, should I trouble you with Prefatory Enlargements; what I therefore would humbly Lay before you as chiefly Conclusive against the said *Tax*, or *Alteration*, is *First*, That it will inevitably Ruin the *Trade*, and *Secondly*, the Revenue will find no Addition thereby.

AND *First*, That it will Ruin, &c.

THIS I am the rather bold to assert, because not only in ours, but all other the like Cases it must be so from the Nature of the Thing it self. For wherever a *Tax* or *Duty* is laid on a Manufacture, for which there is not an absolute Necessity of its Consumption (of which kind is *Wrought Plate*) the Consequence plainly is a Sinking or Destroying of that *Trade*, or *Manufacture*, because it is in every Bodies power to chuse whether they will make Use of that Sort of *Manufacture* so *Tax'd* or no.

THE Application of this to the immediate Case before us, will yet put this in a plainer View. For if as is propos'd Six-pence *per Ounce* should be put on *Wrought Plate*, in all the instances of weighty *Plate* (from whence alone the Value of the Subsidy can arise) the *Manufacturer* must pay full as much, and in many Instances more for *Duty*, than is paid to him for making the *Plate*; so that as (to mention one particular) a Dozen of *Trencher Plates* amounts to about the Sum of 5*l*. the Fashion, the Addition of the *Tax* of Six-pence *per Ounce* will make the said Dozen of
Plates

Plates to amount to 5*l.* more, and Consequently brings the Fashion to Double the Price.

AND as this is truly the State of the Case, in all the weighty instances of Plate (which are at least two-thirds, with regard to the number of Ounces of all the Plate that is made, and from whence, consequently, the Value of the Revenue must be deriv'd) so I can't help for the sake of several of my Brethren (who have many of them great and large Families, wholly maintain'd thereby) further observing that there would be in many Instances of Plate, of which there is really a very great and continual Consumption, full double, and perhaps sometimes treble as much paid for Duty, as is now paid to the Manufacturer for working the said Plate.

THIS being truly and without any enlargement the Case of my self and Poor Brethren, shou'd such a Tax as is propos'd to be levied take place; we cannot but humbly supplicate your Self, and the rest of the Honourable House seriously to take into their consideration what a prodigious Decrease such a Tax must needs make in the Trade it self, and that consequently above three Thousand Families residing in and about *London*, will be depriv'd of their wonted Subsistence.

THO' I believe we may venture (without in the least arrogating to our selves more than we should) to say, That there is no Trade exceeds us in the exquisiteness of Art and Contrivance; yet so low are the Prices the Manufacturing is reduc'd to, that it is not less than 15 or 16 Hours attendance
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is sufficient to the Supporting the common Decencies of Life ; we cannot therefore but humbly hope that such our Circumstances consider'd, we must, on that Account be very unequal to the paying of such a Subsidy.

PERMIT us yet further to observe that on the account of the fineness of our *Standard*, and the Beauty and particular Excellency of the Work has been lately made in *London* ; several Foreign Princes (where the *Standard* is of a Coarser Allay) have granted Commissions for their most valuable *Plate* to be made in *London*, by which, the Profit to the *Artisan* has been so very Considerable (besides the Reputation gain'd thereby to our principal Workers of *Plate*) that it may generally be said to amount to 60 or 70 *per Cent* ; but should either the Tax intended be laid, or an Alteration made in the *Standard*, all the Advantages we have of this kind, above other Countries would necessarily cease, and the Honour and Profit thereby accruing to the Trade immediately flow into some other Channel.

BUT could a Loss of this kind be suppos'd to be supported by us : Yet so much have our Quality and Persons of Distinction been us'd of late to uncommon Curiosity and Delicacy in the Modelling of their *Plate*, (to the perfecting of which our present *Standard* is absolutely necessary) that should an Alteration be made that way, the finest Hands we have would not be able to please them, and the Reason is plainly this, because it's impossible for all the Art of Man to make so compleat a Piece of *Plate* as we now can, where the Silver is of so fine an Allay.

THIS

THIS I must own is a Consideration that the raisedness of your Station renders you not wholly a Competent Judge in ; but thus much you will readily infer as you are a known Encourager of Art, that it is exceeding Pitty such a beautiful Manufacture should be crush'd for want of proper Materials to Work on.

THUS worthy, Sir, have I laid before you, as far as your other great Avocations can probably give you Leisure to examine, such Reasons as will, I hope, convince you, both the laying on of the propos'd *Duty*, and *Alteration* of the *Standard*, must be the Ruin of our Trade ; as the whole of it consists not in the Necessary but Ornamental Parts of Life ; as the Duty will be as great, and in many Instances greater than what is expended for the Manufacture itself ; and lastly, as the *Alteration* of the *Standard* forces on the Manufacturer such Materials as render it impossible for it to be perform'd as it ought, and always has of late been.

I WAS secondly to make it appear that the Revenue will find no Addition thereby.

THIS is so evidently the Consequence of the former, that there needs very few Words to make it appear at first View. For if the Trade by such a Tax is Ruin'd the Revenue to be rais'd, must of Course fail with it ; and whatever may be suppos'd to result from it, considering it as it now stands ; none, or at least very little Wrought Plate being made ; none, or at most very little must be the Revenue arising there from.

UPON

U P O N the whole, then above three thousand Manufacturers, and their Families, and those too, who are inferiour to none in the Beauty and Perfection of their Performances, with the most earnest entreaties, beseech you would have a greater regard both for them and their Families, than either to lay on the Duty intended, or make any Alteration in the Standard ; amongst which is worthy S I R,

Your Most Obedient humble Servant, &c.



POSTSCRIPT.

W O U L D the fear of intruding upon your Patience permit, I could easily make it appear from History, and the plainest Matter of Fact, that several Advantages have accru'd to the Crown by the Manufactur'd Plate, especially at such Times when Bullion has been otherways wanting.

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